

CINTIA SANTANA

Portrait of a Marriage as *Library After Air Raid, London, 1940*

1

Luck has left
the tidy shelves of books intact

and a leaded window in the back:

each square divided into
smaller, beveled panes. They defy

and say *survive, survive.*

2

Three men in bowler hats
stand before the shelves and browse.

As if oblivious to the ruins of the house,

the terrors of the night, they study spines,
reflect. Wear woolen overcoats amidst the char.

A timber holds the standing walls apart.

3

Under rubble, a ladder and a covered chair, crushed.
The archive, leather-bound and made to last.

What once was roof reveals the vastness
of the sky. Inside becomes outside

and everywhere the shock of light.